

5-5
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Dear Reader.....

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! Well Santa has come and gone...and I was relieved to see that he(or she) found us regardless if whether we were good or bad! Anyways... the Magazine, the Club and the Store are all back in full swing. Funny how holidays never are that refreshing or relaxing! Busy times! This new year should be full of all sorts of great events and happenings. We are busy preparing for the "BIZARRE BALL" in March and then Illusions's 6th Birthday Party is around the corner! Thanks again to all of the Gals that helped work on this magazine! Thanks also to everyone that put something under our Xmas Tree for the Calgary Interfaith Foodbank and the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter. This is a great group of girls....growing all the time! 1996 should be a fabulous year for all of us....SEE you at all events!

In Boobies and Blizzards,

Love..... Barbie & Christine

Illusions Calendar

CALGARY

January 13 Las Vegas Nite
January 25 Magic Makeover Nite
with Ty Morgan Skin
with Jane
February 10 Valentine's Day & C
Trivia Contest
February 29 Wig Care by Jami
Lingerie Fashion Show
Mar 16 Novice Night
Mar 28 Card/Board Game Nite
Lip Synch Workshop

EDMONTON

January 20 Queen's Empryre
February 8 Regular Social
For Illusions Edmonton information call
either 486-9661 or 488-3234 leave a
message for Roxanne or Rachel

A Phoenix on the rise
from the chains of

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"Here there be Dragons"
says the sign pointing the
way.

.....Krystal.....

Transgendered Friendly

NEW TO CALGARY



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Socials: Every Last Saturday of the
Month at "The Other Place Bar". The
address is Bay 3 & 4 5579-47St. Red Deer,
Alberta. Call (403) 342-6440 for details.

REMEMBER: Attendance to Illusions
Calgary and Edmonton functions require that
you be a member or invited guest, of either
Illusions or an Illusions member.

For location information, or other details
about who we are call:
(403) 236-7072 in Calgary
(403) 486-9661 in Edmonton

EDITORS: BARBIE, CHRISTINE
AND LISA

RUPAUL
stories..
next Issue



contents

Illusions Magazine ♦ Volume 5 Issue 5

page **10**

Illusions Christmas

Good friends
and good cheer!

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Chit Chat

A meeting with
Princess V Michelle

20

29 meeting

The Club Registry
Finding new friends

Cover Girl

Empress V of Illusions

Teri

Photo
by Alexis

Features

4 lifestyle

Blah, Blah, Blah!"
Come to a fetish ball,
Dress for Pleasure

26 Opinion

Marriage to the
Crossdresser

19 self help

Ear Piercing
Are you ready or not?
- Wearing the stud

Illusions Magazine has added...

Expanded Personals

We are offering **FREE** personal ads
to crossdressers, transsexuals and
their friends. See page 38 for details on how to
join over 200 others across Canada and the U.S.!

Letter from the Editor

Blah, Blah, Blah

Happy New Year to all!

Well how was your Xmas? Hopefully you had a safe New Years...? Ours was busy with children and parents and skiing etc. Santa was good to us (as always)...I guess it pays to be Good and Bad!

Once back at work in January, I was encouraged by the several phone calls that came in from "NEW" people. Seems that the CBC show "Rough Cuts"... that featured our group...is playing around the country. TV's on TV!

I love it when new people find us...and eventually find themselves. The main feelings and comments that came from the "Rough Cuts" show...were good ones. It was well presented and entertaining. Can you spot the crossdresser? Could be your neighbor!

Anyways...looks like 1996 is off to a great start. Winter is dumping more of the white stuff as we speak...and for those of us that do ski...we're loving it!

We are not resting too much in '96...Big Plans are well underway for one of the biggest parties this town has ever witnessed. I'm speaking of the

BIZARRE BALL. March 2, 1996

Arrangements have been made to hold it at the "BANKE " Night Club in downtown Calgary...and it is our aim, to have an action packed visually stimulating evening with all the fetishes present. We are trying to organize some local tattoo places, peircing places, hair salons, clothing stores, furniture stores and other peoples along the way that will make for a fabulous evening.

SEE AND BE SEEN

This is the motto that says it all for this event. We are encouraging people to attend in fetish clothing....which basically runs from anything beyond Regular Office 9 - 5 Clothes. The very talented group "ALITTLE VOODOO" will be the live music along with a Brass Quartet (That I personally know) wink, wink, nudge, nudge...and some Illusions Gals will be in the waitress mode.

Tickets are available through B&B and Illusions and they are fixed at \$15 now, \$20 at the door.

Obviously...if while you are

reading this...to be involved..we would be thrilled to hear from you... otherwise..just get your tickets early. We are only able to house about 600 people and you'd hate to miss this one!

Beyond that major announcement this article is saving some TV topics till next time. Some of the "over coffee" conversations lately have been ranging from.. Do we think that Crossdressers make for good husbands or not? Does sexuality (either real or imagined) really confuse people (even though they say it dosen't)?

How really secure are most people with themselves..what does it take to become confident and proud of your fetish.?

During Xmas..Brian and I spent the day skiing with a pro German ski racer. He tried his best to push us way beyond our limits.. so that we could gain courage, strength and confidence and hopefully a higher skill level. Its similar to the game of life. You need to stretch your limits and horizons even wider in '96.

Have a Great Year and I pray that it is a Healthy and Happy Year for all of us.

Much love....barbie

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Empress Teri

It seems like crossdressing and drag are the "in" things lately. The popular movies "Priscilla, Queen of the Desert" and "To Wong Foo" and the smaller films "Just Like a Woman" and "Wigstock" will be followed in May by what should be another biggie, "The Birdcage", with Robin Williams playing a gay guy whose partner is a drag queen. Of course, movies have always had a little more leeway to cover taboo subjects than some other media, but we now seem to have broken through into advertising as well. First there was Ru Paul being appointed spokesperson for MAC cosmetics (I'm still hoping Ty Morgan can get me a similar contract now that he's a big shot with Ultima II). Then there were the Fruit-of-the-Loom ads suggesting women should get their menfolk to crossdress (see the last issue), and now Scott Paper is running TV spots (pun intended) showing a performer in 18th century costume using their paper towels to remove his makeup--and pad his bra.

This trend seems to have come to Calgary, as well. While out at the infamous Kananaskis conference, we had the opportunity to mingle with the general public a bit and respond to people's natural curiosity. There were lots of questions, always politely asked, from people who were genuinely trying to understand something they realized they were not well informed about. For the most part it was women who asked (I think guys are still afraid you'll think they're making a pass at you--or that you'll make a pass at them!), but I did have

Throne Speech

From the Illusions
Royalty V

ball rolling. Eventually I even got him to try on my four-inch heels and hobble a few steps in them when I discovered he wore the same size as me. This drew roars of approval from the few patrons who had stuck it out until closing time. Enough of the stigma seems to have dissipated that when CBC television came to do a feature on the club, reporter Anthony Connolly felt comfortable enough to get a fabulous Ty Morgan makeover and put on one of Stephanie's dresses (thanks, Steph!).

For a group that is often only a few short steps out of the closet, this kind of spotlight can be confusing. How should we react?

Everyone will have her own way of dealing with this, but I would hope we try keep two things in mind and maybe even adopt them as New Year's resolutions. First, let's resolve to make the most of this situation. Take every opportunity to spread information about what we are and are not. One of the simplest ways to explain what we do to a layperson is to compare it to the many other ways people dress up as part of their fantasies. For example, there are people who dress up as cowboys--even if they can't ride a horse, people who dress up as soldiers--even if they never want to risk getting their heads blown off, and people who wear suits of armour--even if they never want to experience the lice-infested filth characteristic of the Middle Ages. This should be enough to convince them that the idea of someone wanting to dress up as a woman is not so unusual after all, and that one shouldn't jump to too many conclusions about such behaviour! Like I said last month, fantasies don't have to be logical or consistent.

The second thing I hope everyone will resolve is not to forget those who are not so in fashion right now, those in need. While we are out having fun, there are lots of ways we can help others at the same time. Buy 50-50 tickets, tip performers at benefit shows, and throw your spare change at

SCCA Empress Donna DuYahwanna when she's on stage. It helps others, reflects well on the club, and will make you feel more a part of the community.

If we all do these two simple things, we can help make 1996 a better year not only for ourselves, but for others as well. Let's show everyone our beauty is more than skin deep.

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Here we are at the end of another year. As I look back on 1995 a number of things stand out in my memory. It has been a year of tremendous growth for me personally, as I have become much more confident in my feminine persona and as a result much more active in our C.D. community.

With the love and understanding of my beautiful wife and the guidance and help of many of you, the members of Illusions, this year will stand out as the best year of my life.

The Las Vegas night we had at the club to begin the new year started things rolling. I began to really feel a part of the group. In February, we had a karaoke night at which I began to open up a bit and really enjoy the evening instead of worrying if I looked O.K. or if I might offend

Continued on next page

INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING IN ILLUSIONS MAGAZINE ????
BUSINESS CARD \$20, 1/4 PAGE \$40, 1/2 PAGE \$65, FULL PAGE \$80
ALL ADVERTISEMENTS ARE PAID IN ADVANCE OF ISSUE DEADLINE !!!!!

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EDMONTON SHOWS

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

(They should-they're close enough to the North Pole!)

by Teri

Our Edmonton gals held their first-ever Christmas party December 9. Dubbed the Winterfest, it was an event not to be missed.

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The staff at the Roost served up a girdle-busting buffet dinner, which was followed by entertainment.

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The show featured performances by local members as well as the trio Queens to Supremes, an Edmonton group which specializes in the Supremes (due to illness, one of them couldn't attend, making it "Queens Two Supremes").

As if that wasn't enough, there was a fashion show to let the gals strut their stuff. Brenda Lee of Rodéo Drive Collectibles acted as MC.

Besides me, Krystal and Amanda made the long trek through that unexplored tundra north of Airdrie to attend. That trip didn't seem half as long as the one I had to take after getting there, though. After applying my foundation I discovered I had forgotten my false eyelashes. Eventually I ended up putting on boy clothes and walking twenty minutes through downtown Edmonton half made-up to the Eaton Centre to buy a pair!! Many thanks to Roxy, Rachel and the rest of the gals for putting on a great event.



**Gay Lines
Edmonton
403-
486-9661**

Princess Jacqui from page 5

someone with my singing (I probably did, but so what?). It was also in February when I was introduced to another group in Calgary who also work at developing our feminine side. At this point I had only been "out" for about 6 months and I was constantly amazed at how many cross dressers there were in this world and how much each of their stories were similar.

In April the really big breakthrough for me occurred. My wife, somewhat reluctantly, agreed to accompany me to the annual Coronation Ball of the I.S.C.A.. Until that time I had never gone anywhere in feminine attire that I wasn't sure was completely safe for me. I must also shamefully admit that deep down I was homophobic. I wanted everyone who would listen to know that even though I liked to wear a dress I was not gay! How foolish to think that I was so different, some how better because of sexual orientation. The "Ball" turned my head around. These were people just like myself, who were out to have fun. To hell with sex! And boy do they know how to have fun. Leslie and I, as well as a large contingent from Illusions, had the time of our lives.

With the fifth birthday party approaching in June I was encouraged to enter the race for Empress by my dear friend Michele. At first I was reluctant but Michele kept coaxing and I found that I was starting to become more seriously involved in the philosophy of cross dressing as My wife and I struggled to work this aspect into our own lives. I decided to enter the fray, not just as a lark, but with a view to being a more active contributor to our club and to somehow being able to help others with expressing their feminine side.

Continued on page 28

LETTERS



Dear Illusions Ladies, Gents, and anyone else,

Seasons Greetings from south of the border! I thought I would drop you a line and say hi. We are in the middle of an overly white Christmas, which has been a real killer for us "get the christmas shopping done at the last minute" types. Other than being behind in my shopping, I am doing very well. I am currently looking for an apartment and studio space, which hopefully I'll have lined up early next year. I miss you gals a lot! I still smile when I think about some of the good times I've had "hanging out with the ladies". Don't feel to sorry for me though. I've made some great friends and have a truly wonderful group of people for support down here in Jersey. A group of us are going over to New York on Saturday to see the tree at the Rockefeller Centre. It should be a lot of fun, as long as we remember to look out for pick-pockets. (N. Y. is so much fun!) If any of you have the time to write, I'd be more than happy to hear from you. With any luck, I should be coming up to Calgary this summer for a while and I will be sure to drop by and say hello. (I want to see just how many people will actually recognize me now! but that is another story.) Until then, have a safe, happy holiday season. Best wishes, Jeremy Doninger, 247 Phillips Terrace, Union, N.J. 07083, USA.

Dear Barbie and Christine,

Sorry about the delay in returning the "Colour With Style" book. It was very interesting, but I guess what I could really use is something on make up tips. I found the recent Illusions magazine helpful for that, also for it's article on body shaping well done. I'm still waiting for the wig conditioner to arrive that I had ordered and paid for when I was in your store last time. (Nov, 3rd.) No hurry, but I'm starting to look a little staticky. I should drop a line to Teri and thank her for her hospitality and tour around the store and club area after becoming a member. If you think of it, maybe you could thank her for me, and I'll try to do the same. Sincerely, Across the Miles, Andrea #393

Hi to all at Illusions,

It has been a while since I wrote to you all and I must do better in the future. First off I want to thank you for printing my picture in the magazine. I also see by every issue that the club is growing by leaps and bounds so you must be doing everything right there at the club. I know that being a member of Illusions has many benefits, one of which is being peace of mind with yourself, as well as making many great friends. I would like to renew my membership and I am sending along a small gift to help the club. P. S. I have met a member of the club here in my town through the magazine, # 189, we get together as often as possible to talk or dress up. It has been great, thank you again. Joan, #284.

Dear Girls of Illusions;

Hello to everyone! It seems I've been meaning to write this letter for ever. In fact it has only been about a year. Yikes, how time does fly! As many of you know, my S.O. and I moved to Vancouver last December, so unfortunately, attending Illusions functions has been pretty much impossible. We have tried to plan our trips to Calgary around social nights, however to date it just hasn't worked out. We have enjoyed the West Coast, (Weather is great! The traffic sucks!) but do miss everyone from the club. Going out here is no problem, as Davie Street is "everything" friendly, but in terms of having an organization to meet with like minded individuals, unfortunately it doesn't really exist. We have attended a few Betty Page functions but it is more of a fetish organization. You will see a few crossdressers there, but more likely those into the S & M world. It's sort of a fashion show of leather, PVC, chains and whips. We have a few favourite spots on Davie, I would recommend if anyone ever plans on getting out this way. (By the way, if you are coming to Vancouver, feel free to contact me through the club and I can arrange to show you the town.) Gigi's is our favourite restaurant. The staff is very friendly, and the food at reasonable prices make for a great outing. Conveniently it is right across the street from Celebrities, which is the biggest gay club in Vancouver. It is usually hopping and you will always be welcome. Often on Friday's and Saturday's there are lineups after 10:00 p.m. so go early if you want to avoid this. Parking spots can be hard to find. (Tip: We always find a spot behind Denny's which is less than a block away.) You can generally feel pretty comfortable walking down Davie any evening.

Getting out as often as we would like has been difficult. Work and family take up most of the time, so the three hours it takes me to get ready, means nights out on the town are rare. None the less we do our best, and as this is not a secret in the household, I have the luxury of dressing at home whenever I can. Well that's a brief update on me. I have enclosed a cheque to renew my membership for another year. At this writing it is our intention to be at the Christmas party, so we will ..hopefully see you all at that time! Best wishes to all the girls of ILLUSIONS! RAVEN, member #109

When her friends griped about their husbands, June Lenny felt lucky. Her husband, Rick, an air force sergeant, was a devoted family man who loved to spend his free time with June and their two young daughters. The couple talked easily, worked problems out calmly, and made love often. Their marriage was the envy of their friends.

But, today their picture-perfect marriage is just a bittersweet memory. After 20 years together, the Lennys are now divorced. June lives with the children in Colorado and is struggling to come to terms with a life that's been shattered by shame and betrayal. Rick lives in Florida with a new name, a new life and a new body. He had a sex change operation two years ago.



June and Rick Lenny in 1973

Rick today (now known as Sharon)

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

"My Husband Had a SEX CHANGE!"

After 12 years of marriage and two daughters, June Lenny discovered the unbelievable truth about the man she loved...

BY ESTHER DAVIDOWITZ

MY HUSBAND HAD A SEX CHANGE.....

"Not in a million years could I have imagined that this would happen to us," says June, 41. "I believe I could have dealt with alcoholism, cheating, drugs, unemployment, you name it. But not *this*. Not my man turned into a woman."

June was a 19 year old student at a junior college in Miami when she met Rick, her handsome, 6' - 1", 20 year old neighbour. They were instantly attracted to each other. After a whirlwind courtship of just two weeks, Rick proposed, and in 1973, just one year after they met, the two married. Then Rick joined the air force and after a two year stint, he left to resume work as an auto mechanic but remained in the air force reserves. June worked as a waitress and office clerk.

In 1975, three months after the birth of their first daughter, Renee, the couple faced their first significant marital crisis.

Rick, feeling rejected by June's devotion to the baby, found the attention he craved elsewhere--with another woman. "It was a rough time for us," June confides. "But we worked it out. We always could talk and resolve our problems."

In 1980, the couple settled in Denver and in 1983, their second daughter, Nikki, was born. "Everything seemed right," June says. "We were a complete family." But one night, a year later, their happy marriage of eleven years began to disintegrate. June snuggled up against Rick in bed and recoiled in horror. Rick was wearing nylon pantyhose. Repulsed, she asked, "What is this?"

Rick looked embarrassed. "It's to keep my legs warm," he answered. "But you have thermal underwear," June cried. "These feel better," Rick answered. "Besides," he argued, "what's the harm in it?"

June, utterly confused, did *not* press the issue. "This was my husband, and I loved him," she explains. A couple of months later, Rick supplemented the pantyhose with a pair of satin

panties. June was horrified. "I don't like this, Rick," she warned. "Why are you doing this?" Again, Rick tried to calm her fears. "It's no big deal. Women can wear men's clothes and no one bats an eye." One night, Rick added a bra to his outfit. "He looked ridiculous. It was such a turnoff. And I told him so."

One Afternoon, June Received the Biggest Shock of Her Life...

She came home early from work to discover an oddly familiar person coming down the stairs. After gazing past the heavy makeup, long dark hair, fake nails, large breasts, tight miniskirt, silk stockings and spike heels, a mortified June realized this was Rick. "I freaked out," she says. "I screamed, 'Go away. Don't come near me.' I knew we had a serious problem, but I hadn't a clue what to do about it. I kept hoping it would go away, that this was some phase that my husband would outgrow." June's shock was Rick's liberation. As early as age six, Rick says he knew he was different and he "wanted to be a little girl." He yearned to play with dolls and bake cookies with his mum. But his parents let him know that little boys "don't do that." And so, he says, "from an early age I learned to have two separate lives." He took up wrestling and track, but his heart and mind told him he was something else. And, although he had sexual relationships with women, Rick never felt comfortable. I never felt the magic, the chemistry.

That is, until he met June. "It's hard to explain why, but I knew right away that June was going to be a special person in my life. I fell in love with her as a person. Sex with June, "was always satisfying." But there was always troubling him, something he didn't fully understand but knew he had to hide. Rick would secretly buy women's clothes. He stashed bra, panties, nylons and other feminine paraphernalia in a locked storage shed.

On his days off, Rick would tell June that he was going to ride his motorcycle, sail his boat, or hike in the woods. But he failed to tell her he'd do these things dressed as a woman.

Rick loathed being secretive and deceptive, but he was petrified the truth would scare his loved ones away. When Rick slipped on pantyhose that now infamous night, he says' it was a desire to reconcile the two sides of himself. "I felt free. I finally let down this wall around me."

But each time Rick gave his wife a larger glimpse of his secret life, there was deep anxiety. "There was always that fear that June would say that's too much, that at some point there would be the ultimatum: Stop or leave," says Rick. June told herself again and again that this--this phase, this compulsion, this bizarre hobby--would stop. She tried to be tolerant, but it was unbearable. She told know one. "I didn't want people to think my husband was a wacko. I thought it would reflect on me." And of course, more than anything, she wanted to protect her children.

Naively hoping that if she didn't over react, somehow her husband would "just get it out of his system," June agreed to let Rick dress up Monday, his day off, as long as he switched back into more acceptable attire before the girls, then 7 and 15, got home from school. But eventually Renee and Nikki began to notice that something was "odd about Dad." Sometimes his lips seemed suspiciously red ("cherry flavoured lip balm," June would claim), his eyes disturbingly dark (Dad's tired," she'd fib).

Rick went through cycles, often tossing out all his women's garments in a fit of self loathing. Each time he did, June would hoped his strange compulsions would come to an end, but then "I'd catch him wearing a pair of women's panties under his jeans

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The Illusions 1995 Christmas Potluck was yet another success. The gals brought a table full of fine foods and goodies which were devoured regardless of their concern for pretty waistlines. Christmas joy was expressed when we all held hands and spoke of our thanks for being who we are. Gifts to the Food Bank and the Women's Shelter were placed under the tree and Illusions donated \$500 to Gay Lines Calgary to support them in their cause of channelling people to the right organisations, such as Illusions. See you next year!

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When Ken Met Barbie

Introducing Jahna Steele, pinup for the nineties

BY JOHN TAYLOR

Jahna Steele - singer, actor, performer - looks out the window of her Waikiki suite and recrosses her showgirl legs. it's in these unguarded moments, when you can look hard without being rude, that you search for something, anything, that would tip you off to the fact that she once was a man. If you really try, you might catch a hint of Greg Louganis in her upper back, but 36-22-35 sure seems female. Frankly, Jahna (John before the surgeons did their work) is prettier than most women. And this is very confusing. How does one get beyond the concept that somewhere beneath that \$40,000 worth of cosmetic reconstruction, there's a guy? How could he - she - know what it means to be a woman?

"God," she says sounding like Heather Locklear, "I've been one for so long that I don't know. I never felt like I was ever a guy. I started living as a woman when I was seventeen and had my operation at twenty-one.

"If we met and I didn't tell you, you wouldn't know." (She's right there.) "I've gone out with the most drop dead gorgeous men in the world and celebrities I will not even name. And they thought, correctly I might add, that I am a woman. I can look at myself in the morning and say, Okay, you look like a chick. But if I woke up in the morning and looked like Lou Ferrigno, it'd be like, Hey, it aint working."

Here's how it does work: Jahna, who is thirty six and very blonde, who came up from San Antonio and won Vegas's Sexiest Showgirl on the Strip award, and who recently had a cameo on NYPD Blue, needs a straight man who loves women. And this man must recognize that beneath those 36D's there are Y chromosomes loitering, the same ones



that produced Mike Ditka.

"Yeah, she says, he'd have to know I felt a little gender discomfort. But it beats what I was looking for in a man in the past. Before, it was always (a) will he abuse me and (b) treat me like shit? I have been through a string of gorgeous but useless men. My new thought in life is ix-nayon the eroids-stay, though I have to say my weakness is still big, built men."

What makes Jahna unique among transsexuals is that she is, in effect, a post-operative pinup. In a society in which women strive to be respected by men, Jahna, the son/daughter of a retired police officer, chose to become Las Vegas Barbie. How does she feel when construction workers start whistling and hooting?

"Hey I usually make money off them - jokejoke. No, I just love glamour and glitz." She tosses back her hair. "It's a beautiful part of being a female. Loved Ann-Margret, loved Raquel Welch -- loved all that. I've always been an entertainer. And I

The Third Sex

have no problem with men. It's women who seem threatened by my glamour. A lot of times I'll get derogatory comments from women."

"And I don't believe that a woman can do everything a man can do," she says. And I've seen some pretty burly dykes. There should be male and female things." For example?" Men should pick up the check. "That having been established, there's always the supremely delicate topic of, well, if there's no there there anymore, what's there now? "You mean the bionic womb?" Jahna arches her eyebrows like a pro, then laughs.

"It works the same as the one on the last woman you made love to. A gynecologist might know, because I don't have a uterus." And for the sake of David Hasselhoff, what about orgasms? "Of course - through the beauty of microsurgery, Multiplely. See, I had no point of reference. I didn't know what it was like to orgasm before because I was a virgin until after my surgery."

Jahna extends a long arm, a jubilee of perfume and bracelets. Her skin is soft, translucent as a puppy's eyelids. "I have the Mattel stamp of approval on my ass. Hey I was a bridesmaid at my brother's wedding." Responding to perhaps one visual transgression too many, she looks down and adds: "No, they don't change your nipples. These are my same old nipples. They're not huge, but they're girl's nipples. I do have to take hormones every day, though I forgot for a couple of weeks. That would explain the hair on my back. Just kidding. Listen, what are we? We're shells. Vehicles of the soul. My soul is what's feeling. All the surgery in the world isn't gonna make you feminine if you cant feel it inside.

And I always felt like a woman.

Jahna's off now to judge a karaoke contest at a Waikiki mall. One last question: Has she ever slept in dirty sweat socks?

"No!" She makes a prim move. For a fleeting moment there's a little Dan Marino in the depths of her eyes. Then it's gone. That's it Cancel the chromosome test. We're fooled. "Not fooled," Jahna admonishes with a wink, "convinced."

- B.A.

Reprinted from Esquire magazine,
April, 1995.

TV-14
Confidential

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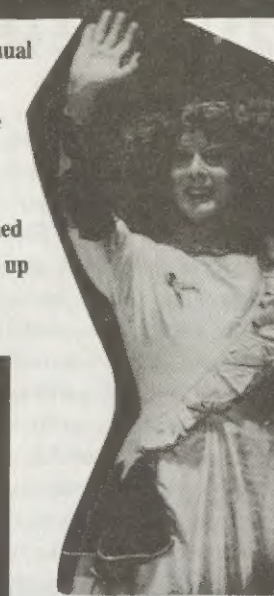
WORK IT GIRL!

It's great when we get together for Illusions socials, but it takes allot to make them happen. As a club member, please volunteer your time to clean the facilities before and after socials, wash dishes throughout the week, and sweep the steps. This is your club, our club.

Don't be afraid
Place your ad and photo into
our registry and get response
from other TV/TS's.



STONEWALL has pulled it off again. The third annual **Equality Show** brought together another extraordinary line-up of major stars and filled the **Albert Hall** with over 6,000 people, to raise an expected **£100,000** to go towards the lobbying group's current campaigns. **Elton John** headlined for the second consecutive year, this time frocking up as a blond vamp to sing the old Beverley Sisters number, 'Sisters', with **Kylie Minogue**.



LONDON



THE GIRLS UP NORTH.....



Another year has come and gone. It's been a terrific year here in Edmonton. So much has happened, it's hard to know where to begin. We have had many new people show an interest in the club this year. In the spring, Christine informed us that she would no longer be able to host our monthly get togethers. As a consequence, the girls pulled together to find ourselves another meeting place. After one false start, we have found ourselves a place we really can call home in Edmonton. We have done most of the renovations to the place to date, but unfortunately, there is still more work to do. We're hoping to get rolling on what's left early in the new year. We have also decided to start holding our socials on Saturdays as well, starting in January.

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These changes, the success we enjoyed at the ball in August plus an increase in new & younger members prompted us to put on another gala in December, one that we have christened Winterfest. The weather on December 9th may have been cold outside, but everyone inside at the party had a blast. Everyone raved about the buffet. Afterwards, came the entertainment. Roxy, Raquel, Shauna, Veronica & Tera did the modelling for the fashion show with outfits made by Rodeo Drive Collectibles. The girls got to

model some clothes that many girls would die for! They looked, as someone once said, "simply marvellous, darling!"

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To round out the evening was the lip sync show. For this we had performances from Roxy, Veronica, yours truly and the Queens to Supremes. The girls did some fantastic numbers and even the occasional wolf whistle was heard from the crowd. Brit won the door prize for the evening and Shirley (DeeDee's wife) won the 50/50 draw, thanks in part to my long legs. Afterwards, the party continued at The Roost and went on until the wee hours of the morning.

I would personally like to thank Roxy, Vikki and Brenda Lee for all their hard work in pulling off our biggest spectacular event to date.

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Buoyed by the success of our first Winterfest, I know there will be more of them. For those that couldn't make it this year, we've included some photos of the party.

Some of the active members in Edmonton have been mulling over the idea of going out, as a group, once a month "en femme" to various restaurants in the city. A sort of "TV Dinner Club", if you'll pardon the pun. Stay tuned for details on this and other exciting plans that are being cooked up for Edmonton in 1996.

Till next time, OXOXOX
Rachel

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WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO DO.....IN EDMONTON!

Some of the girls in Edmonton have noted that many of the newer members and even some of the older members did not know of some of the TV friendly places where they could go for shopping or even of the clubs and restaurants that they could visit, be their true selves and have fun at the same time.

To that end we thought it would be a good idea to publish a list of these "Friendly Places" in Edmonton. Below are lists of the clubs, restaurants and stores where at least once, one or more members have visited "en femme" and been treated courteously. We're sure that there are other places that some members have gone to that are "CD friendly", but this is at least a starting point. If anyone knows of a place that is not on this list, please let Rachel or Roxy know so we can update the master list. One cautionary note however. Some discretion is always advisable. Staff and management can and do change. The main thing to remember is that any business is after only one thing, that is your money. Whether you are "en femme" is often immaterial.

CLUBS

- The Roost 10345 - 104 St.
- Queen's Empyre 10155 - 112 St.
- Boot's & Saddles 106 St & 102 Ave (North of A&B Sound)
- Buddy's Place 10112 - 124 St. (opening in late January)

RESTAURANTS

- Boystown Cafe 10116 - 124 St.
- Motoraunt 66 St north of Yellowhead Trail
- Coffee Cup 10334 - 108 St.
- Nina's Cafe 124 St & 102 Ave
- Cafe Select 10018 - 106 St.

- The King & I 10160 - 82 Ave.
- Keegan's 8709 - 109 St.
- Roman Pizza 12928 - 127 St.
- North China 9920 - 82 Ave.
- Cafe de Ville 10137 - 124 St.
- Earl's Calgary Trail @ Whitemud Dr.

SHOPPING

- Rodeo Drive 9916 - 82 Ave.
- Tall Girl Edmonton Centre
- Suzy Creamcheese West Ed Mall
- Suzy Sheer Kingsway Garden Mall
- Value Village All locations
- Antel's Bonnie Doon Mall
- Bryan's Southgate Mall
- Faces Heritage Mall

CBC

PROGRAMMING A DRAG

Our November 30 social gave members who volunteered a chance to become (sorry)--TV stars. CBC Roughcutz reporter and director Anthony Connolly and cameraman Don visited to do a feature on cross-dressing in Calgary. The segment, which aired December 18, featured Illusions and Barbie & Christine's shop.

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Anthony decided to immerse himself in the subject by getting done over himself, and even agreed to shave part of his chest. Ty Morgan graciously agreed to do the makeover, while Stephanie lent a new green velvet dress, shoes, and other accoutrements. We topped him off with one of Empress Teri's red wigs done in an updo by Ivan, who has taken over makeup and hairdressing duties at Photos by Alexis now that Ty is working at the Revlon/Ultima II counter at the Bay downtown. "Toni" ended up looking like Winona Judd and was so impressed with her new persona she went home dressed to show her wife!

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CBC referred several calls from potential new members to the

this in from our Edmonton ladies..

Roxy and Lady Blue do the Symphony

The Chieftains, the world's greatest classical Irish folk ensemble, came to Edmonton on November 7 to play with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra at the Jubilee Auditorium. Being enthralled both with this group and classical music, this was a high brow event that was beyond all temptation for Roxanne to pass up! Besides, she had just had a ankle length, low cut, high class, emerald green and black, sparkle glamour gown, accessorised by long black opera gloves, created for her just for this type of an event. Roxy definitely was not just going to blend into this crowd!

Her major problem was finding a suitable partner for the night. Someone else with the brass and class to pull off an evening in drag at an uppercrust event. Someone who was not going to mar the occasion by being intimidated or scared by the amount of heat we could potentially draw. This was not easy to solve. More than one person turned down her invite for fear of bashing. Then out of the blue - yes, Lady Blue. Brass, class, and sass, topped with a bundle of flaming red hair, coupled with "don't give a damn" attitude. Purrfect! Roxanne could not have found a better companion for the evening. Lady Blue nicely juxtaposed Roxy, choosing a classy black satin and velvet outfit, 3" spikes, and gold accessories. Lady Blue also was not going to just blend into this crowd!

The music was just fantastic. It brought tears to both our eyes. The Chieftains blended Irish with South American, North American and Continental sound. The message was subtle but clear. We can all live together, and find joy in our similarities and differences. It was a very moving event if you were in tune.

However, this was not the only performance going on at the Jubilee that evening. Lady Blue and Roxy provided considerable, though somewhat constrained, entertainment for a number of folks on the first balcony during the intermission! You see, Roxy had a problem with her new gown. The back

refused to stay up. Whenever she walked it slid towards her derriere, exposing a considerable amount of her for everyone's viewing pleasure. So we had to stand with our backs to the wall, next to one of the bars, looking out at the crowd, and into the faces of all the nice folks lined up to get their drinks. No one could overlook us!

We never stopped laughing throughout the intermission. The sideways glances, the penetrating stares, the sudden interest in their own feet when we caught their eyes, the knowing smiles from some of the more exotic women, the tittering and smirking in the little social circles. It was just such a hoot. They didn't quite know what to make of us, but my goodness did they give us some space! And the fact that we were literally front and centre, totally carefree, laughing and giggling, ultra glam, girl and boy-girl, coupled with such attitude, must have blown more than a few narrow minds that evening. We weren't hiding, we weren't ashamed - in fact we were openly proud. Roxy intoned a mantra under her breath - "Yes we've arrived and we have a right to be here, we don't just hang around in sleazy night-clubs; we have a culture and are cultured, we are a part of your community." Both of us felt we had made an important statement that night.

Roxanne was just dying to mingle with the crowd and chat up some of the boys, especially a trio of handsome fellahs in kilts! But her dress provided an unexpected measure of restraint - oh well, perhaps there is a God watching over us.

We wondered how many secret cross dressers got a good look at a glamour queen that night? Probably quite a few. And what did they think about the brazenness of us showing up to the symphony in such high brow drag?

My goodness, it was a great evening; the company was perfect, the music was outstanding and we just had a blast. We'll be doing it again. You should too.

Edmonton boy steps into the fashion world

by Coreen

Former Edmontonian, Patrick Cox, has done the impossible. While footwear designers have always found it hard to be accepted by the elite of the fashion industry, Cox has not only done so, but in a big way, and become the darling on the industry. His success has prompted the opening of his third store; this time on Madison Ave. N.Y. At the opening gala, numerous celebrities attended, including several famous drag queens such as RuPaul and Baroness. Said Baroness, after expounding Cox's talents, "I can't wait to try some on!" His styles cover the gamut from practical to sexy to haute couture. An example of one his more fringe designs would be the loafer set as a mule pump, and in a selection of florecent colors!

Surprisingly, Cox says he was brought up quite academically. His favourite subject in school was biology, and his most hated... art! He says working in the fashion industry does not require one to be artistic, but more in having a "sense of design". His mother is astounded; "He was never creative as a child!"

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Many thanks to the sponsors who donated prizes for our Las Vegas night, including Photos by Alexis, the Midnight Café, Ty Morgan and Ultima II. Here are some details on our upcoming events:

TY MORGAN, Calgary's premier makeup artist and drag performer, will do a makeover session at our Thursday, Jan 25 social. Ty was our stunning cover girl a couple of issues back and is well known for his ability to bring out the best in you. Jane, one of Ty's colleagues, will also be on hand to discuss skin care.

Our **CD TRIVIA CONTEST** at the Valentine's Social (Sat, Feb 10) will give you an opportunity to show everyone you're not just another pretty face. Prizes will be awarded, so leave those blonde wigs at home that night, gals!

Don't miss **WIG STYLING BY JAMI** at our Thursday, February 29 social. Jami already styles the wigs of many Illusions gals, and he can do great things to restyle or rejuvenate your locks. Lady-in-Waiting Christine will also be organizing a **LINGERIE FASHION SHOW** for that night, so if you're interested in participating, please let her know.

NEW MEMBERS NIGHT will be the theme of our Saturday, March 16 social. To encourage those many members who have signed up but haven't yet made it to a party, we will be providing special help to

overcome those first-time jitters. Contact First Princess Michelle for details.

CARDS AND BOARD GAMES will be available to test your skill at our Thursday, March 28 social. It will also be our first **LIP SYNCH WORKSHOP**. If you're thinking of running for Empress or just want to try breaking into show biz, let First Princess Michelle know and she'll put you on the card. A videocamera will be available so you can watch an instant replay of your debut if you want.

COME OUT AND BE INVOLVED!

That's as far as we're able to predict right now, but beyond March we'll be having a photo ID night with professional portrait photographer Alexis (the one who took those photos Empress Teri is always sticking in everybody's face!), more lip-synch workshops, and who knows what else. If you have any ideas, or would like to volunteer to help put something on, please let us know!

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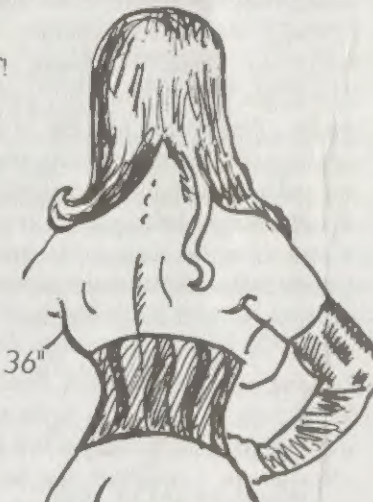
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THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE



As I sit in this cage, in this place of monstrosity alone, always alone, even in the physical midst of hundreds of hundreds of other captivated individuals, I am so very much alone. I realize that I have a need. A need which I have been desperately trying to evade, but which constantly haunts my daily existence and torments my every night. A need for "companionship." There is a line from a well known song that says; "People who need people are the luckiest people in the world." Those who are gay and who have lost their freedom feel this need so acutely. While their environmental contacts with people become more difficult and stressful because of segregated housing, and loss of freedom. Their need to find comfort in companionship does not diminish. Certainly the need is there.

I can think of no faster way to reach the state of loneliness than to be confined to a cell without any personal contact with other individuals. I can think of no greater way to feel rejected than to develop a state of loneliness through incarceration, and feel that all of those outside don't care. You begin to feel sorry for yourself. You begin to turn inward. You begin to hurt, cry, and dream. Yes, dream, for only in dreams can you find and manifest the friend, the companionship, the trust, the love, the understanding, the feeling of being part of something, of someone, of belonging.

I have written many letters out to many clubs, organizations, universities and publications in regards to reaching out and exploring their common experiences, in regards to investigating the possibility of sharing and exchanging ideas, thoughts, dreams, feelings and forming friendships. A spark can ignite and spread into a blazing accomplishment. If only a few hearts would unite.

Via letters; an effort can be made to put people in contact with people who need people, in that they can bring hope to each other, by being able to share their common situations, and experiences, and deriving strength and support from each other. New worlds and new vistas can be opened. I believe that we can choose the world we live in by changing even the enormous threats to our existence - one step at a time. We can do this by thinking globally and acting locally.

It is not hard to take ten to fifteen minutes out of a day, out of a week, to sit down and write to someone, to be able to share the mental and moral exchange and sympathetic feelings that flow from one person to another, in a shared lifestyle. To be able to encourage others who

have the same problems, the same day to day challenges, and the same hills to climb.

An old Arab proverb I once read, states: "A friend is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of ones heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away."

Just an easy exchange of conversation and a willingness to listen and offer insight that is backed up by experience and concern, can be such a help to an incarcerated gay person. Just as even a willingness to come and visit can be the product that fosters an upswing attitude and changes one's life from withdrawing and reticent attitudes to ones of happiness and joy. By doing this, each one of us in our own way, can make a difference - in our lives and in the lives of others.

Incarceration doesn't diminish a person's humanness. Just because a person has made a mistake in life, doesn't stop them from being just as human as anyone else. We cry, laugh, work, create, marry, rear children, care and love.

Caring is the art of sharing, Sharing is the art of living, Living is the art of loving, Loving is the art of caring. We care for all of you out there. We want to share with each of you, because we will eventually be living among you out there, and we want you to know that we love you. We want and need your help, your understanding, and your participation with us. The greatest momentum in life is developed by saying "Yes" to opportunities to make ourselves useful to someone else. Don't spend your precious time asking "Why isn't the world a better place?" It will only be time wasted. The question to ask is, "How can I make it better?" To that question there is an answer.

I challenge each of you reading this cry for help to write me a letter.

Sincerely Al Cunningham

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By Coreen

For the transsexual (TS), various changes to the body are inevitable, assuming that transition is the final goal. Never the less, these changes can be the cause of some anxiety. This is especially true when presenting these alterations for the first time in the public eye, but usually with time it becomes easier, and the fears gradually subside. The more they can present themselves as a female, the closer the TS is to their aspiration.

For the crossdresser (CD), the same initial anxieties can exist also. For most cases, the difference is that the CD usually doesn't want to show any permanent changes, or to be thought of ever as female in his day to day life.

And so the dilemma exists as to how far the CD can go in creating the most convincing woman possible when dressed, and the most convincing male when not!

Over the past year or so, I have decided to push the edge abit, and find out just where "the line" is. This started with epilating my hands and wrists, later plucking my eyebrows more and more, and then growing my nails longer and longer. To my delight, I was amazed that no one has ever even noticed, let alone made any comment. The one single exception was a co-worker who did notice my nails once and asked why they were so long. I told him that I was growing them to try to stop my habit of biting off, and now I liked them that way. He simply accepted my answer, and that was the end of it.

To me, the key has been the gradual rate of change. One must remember though, that we do run into people who we haven't seen in along time. To them, the changes won't be gradual, but seen all at once. Still, in such cases, I've only had one ask rhetorically: "Now what's different about him...?", without expecting an answer.

Of course in making any modifications to ones body, you have to be prepared to

Pierced Ears: The time maybe right!

have everyone notice. Like I've said, I've been pleasantly surprised in my case, but was always ready to defend myself. This consists of making any potential problem, their problem, not yours, by making sure you don't give them the upper hand, or the power over you. If your happy with it, then it is their problem in accepting it!

And so we come to the latest alteration; getting my ears pierced. I had wanted to do this for some time, but had been scared to. Unlike all the other adjustments, there was no way it would go unnoticed, what with the gold shining away and sparkling.

In looking around though, it's pretty obvious that body piercing has never been more accepted than it is today. A couple of pierced ears pale by comparison to what some are doing to their bodies.

Even so, we weren't talking about some young teenager who's friends are all doing it. This was a 38 yr old man who has never worn any jewelry, not even a watch or wedding ring, and works with some pretty macho guys using 10 ton cranes, etc! Still I couldn't resist and decided to do it.

First I gathered all the information I could on it, by phoning shops, and talking to friends live and via the Internet. Here's some of the advice I recieved...

You can start by getting just one ear done first. It's not supposed to matter anymore, but some still consider just in the right ear to mean you're gay. If your worried, stick with the left.

There was some disagreement as to whether the gun, or hand method of piercing was better. Fans of the hand method argued that the former was akin to "ripping blindly through the skin" and not "finding the most natural route" as in the hand piercing. The ripping was supposed to greatly increase the likelihood of getting infection. I had mine done via the gun, and with simple initial care (the same suggested for both methods), I had no problems.

With the first done, I prepared for the onslot on merciless teasing the next day at work. Once again I was suprised. It seemed the men didn't notice, but the women did. The ladies didn't seem to be negative at all. This gave me a great responce when some of the guys finally started to notice (after a week!). I told

them that it was only the girls that noticed, and this not only shut them up, it made them blush in embarasment. Other standard questions and answers included; "What's that?"/"A sign of the times.", "Why'd you do that?"/"Come on, get with it! It's the 90's!". For the real tough guys I found that "It was either this or a tatoo" worked best..

After letting the first ear heal the suggested 6 weeks, the problem of getting the second ear done was solved by some more great tips. A virtually invisible 'plug' for the first hole can be made by cutting about 1/2" of the fine plastic found in garment price tag holders, and melting both ends into small blobs with a lighter. It passed the "wife test" who said it was practically undetectable, and the "work test" has also proven this true.

The cost, including the stud was \$8, or two for \$14. Care involved washing the area with hydrogen peroxide then rotating the stud. This was repeated five times a day. The stud must not be taken out for the 6 weeks.

As a final word, you should be aware that some people have reactions to certain metals in the posts. Pure gold or silver isn't the problem, it's the alloys that are added to strengthen the posts, especially silver. If you are the type that react, gold alloy should cause less of a problem, while stainless (surgical) steel or titanium post are best. Go for it!

New friends at Illusions

#394 Jan Has celebrated 39th birthday quite a few times but still deep in the closet.

#395 Laurie New, from Edmonton.

#396 J.F. Here's hoping she'll find her way our of the closet.

#397 Francine Loves the magazine. Looking forward to meeting the girls of Edmonton.

#398 Selene Wants to meet others; but say's she's deep in the closet.

CHIT CHAT
with our "95/96"
Illusions 1st Princess V

MICHELLE HART

Princess Michelle has been involved with Illusions for over 2 years now and Calgary and area has never been the same! Michelle and her other half keep very busy, planning and organizing all sorts of events for the crossdressing community.

Illusions: How did you first find out about Illusions?

Michelle: I found a newsletter on a newsstand in Edmonton. We were on holidays at the time, kids in tow....I saw the mag and had to figure out how to buy it! Eventually I got my hands on it. I felt really embarrassed. I also bought a popular mechanics mag so no one would notice! I started buying the mag's in Calgary, totally aware of where Illusions was. After about a year I got up the nerve to come in and finally meet Barbie! She wasn't there! I left and then didn't get the nerve again for 2 years! I kept reading about everyone and pretty much in awe of everybody. I was really concerned whether I would be accepted or measure up etc.

Illusions: What was it like when you came in for the 2nd time?

Michelle: I had started with a phone conversation with Barbie and I was "out at home" at the time. I felt that it was time to join the club. My confidence level was stronger and my "other half" encouraged me as well. I came up the next day and Barbie helped me try on some wigs etc and gave me a registration letter. I was really nervous because she was the only other person to have known what I was up to. I felt really reserved and took the form. I couldn't make myself sign up on the spot...but I knew I would sometime along the way. I came back the next week with the forms ready to go and Barbie said

there was a social coming up right away.....EGADS! I knew I had to go to it!

Illusions: You must of been pre-crazed that week waiting to see everyone! ?

Michelle: I was! I was really excited in one way. Very apprehensive in another way. I decided I was going to attend and start "being me"! I also decided that I couldn't sit in a corner anymore and that I was going to force myself to be social.

Illusions: How was that first social?

Michelle: It was the best night of my life!

Illusions: Ahhh. How sweet!

Michelle: My closet wasn't very large and my makeup was garden variety... I could see that others knew how to do

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things better etc...but I decided to use my own stuff regardless. I tried to get to know others and learn from them. I was pretty sure that others would help me out along the way. And they did. The learning experience has been really rewarding and its been really fun.

Illusions: So how is your closet now? No doubt your makeup has evolved too?

Michelle: My closet is quite versatile even though I have to keep it locked up. I took over the old cold room in the basement..threw out all the veggies and put in some closet organizers. Some mirrors and lots of lights.

Illusions: Is it still cold?

Michelle: It can be..but with all the lights on..it warms up!

Illusions: What's involved in getting Michelle ready for an outing?

Michelle: First off..I love to plan my outfits in advance. Shopping and preparing makes for a great evening. Depending on what I'm wearing..shaving is the first undertaking. It may include the body or it may be just the face. I have a very dark and wiry beard and proper close shaving takes a minimum of 45 minutes. From there then I start basic beard cover and foundations being careful to cover all areas that will be seen. Blend, blend, blend! The goal

is to achieve a blank canvas on which to build. Contouring and highlighting are next, followed by blush and eyebrows.

Illusions: You're eyes are always really pretty...what's your secret?

Michelle: I take alot of time on my eyes. I have a million eye colors and experiment with them all the time. I usually use a minimum of 3 colors plus liquid cake liner to give my lids shape. I pluck my eyebrows which gives me a bit of a lift and most of the time I mascara my own lashes.

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Illusions: How long does the entire process usually take you?

Michelle: If I'm by myself and in a hurry...about an hour ...but if I'm socializing in the makeup room at Illusions...it takes as long as it takes! Its a current joke about how long Michelle can take in front of the mirror!

Illusions: Well as long as you're enjoying it!

Michelle: Oh, I do...that's one of the best parts...getting ready.

Illusions: Being Princess for you this year must be quite the thrill? Did you ever dream that you would become this involved?

Michelle: It's funny that you should ask that...that way! If you had told me years ago that I would be a princess one day..I would of laughed at you!

I'm really enjoying this role and its a real honor to be a new member plus to take on this role. I've always the kind of person that gets involved with whatever I'm doing. I feel that I am a

very diverse type of gal. I'm not really political...I just love to socialize.

Illusions: Are you more confident as a person these days?

Michelle: Yes..more so then I used to be. When I was in business I had to portray a certain image..aggressive etc..but never really felt comfortable. Now my work has changed and my demands are lighter. The social aspect now of my life is larger with a lot larger proportion.

Illusions: Some would say that Michelle is rather ditzzy sometimes? Is that an act...a complete turn around from your male self?

Michelle: Some people would think that Michelle is a kind of an act...but I think that the past aggressive business guy was the act. When Michelle is out and about I'm able to be very relaxed and I don't have to prove anything to anyone...so I guess the ditzzy presentation is what you see. I can be serious...so can Michelle.

The thing for me now..out of the closet and out at Illusions..I can bring those two expressions and personalities together...and I felt that happening.

Illusions: That's great that not only is a growth stage occurring...but you are aware of it too!

Michelle: I've taken the time to try and do things in natural stages. I use my friends to bounce off feelings and cushion some thoughts. From it I pick and choose what works for me. Life is a big learning experience.

Illusions: Any goals for 1996?

Michelle: Keep my fingers out of the bandsaw this year! haha

I do want to expand on my friendships, I have some performance projects that I'm working on. My wardrobe will be growing too! I am really looking forward to many of the club events and I'm really trying to find the time to support other community events as well.

I see the whole community as being something that should be supported.

Illusions: Are you going to run for

Empress '96/'97?

Michelle: I'm thinking about it. I worry about being a practical Empress seeing as how I live out of town!? I don't think its a problem...so if I can overcome that perceived view..I'll probably run.

Illusions: So you are planning something for our Birthday party then?

Michelle: You bet!

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privacy considerations.

Illusions: Thank you very much for the Princess column's each issue...have you felt that you have an angle or agenda that you go after each time?

Michelle: Well thanks...and yes I do feel that I mainly go after the closet people..trying to always draw them out and making them more aware. I often use my own experience to illustrate to others...that "Coming out of the Closet"...is a lot better than staying in the Closet. Its really hard to do ..but if you get a chance to look back..its really silly to see how big the fears had been.

I was so inward...before Baby...look at me NOW!

CBC & NUTV Portrés Illusions by GINA

Last month (December) saw two occasions on which the ladies of Illusions were televised. Yes children, T.V.'s on TV, and not as freakish guests on a "Talk Show". The CBC's program "Rough Cutz" sent a small contingent to Illusions consisting of a reporter and cameraman to shoot a short piece to be aired as a segment on their program. The on-air personality, Anthony, came to the club to do some preliminary scouting of the location and to talk to some of the initial contacts namely; Barbie, Christine, Empress Terry and myself. We enlightened him with some of the facts regarding Illusions and what the club consists of. He went back to his producers with an outline for production, it should be mentioned here that the CBC made an earlier attempt on the part of the Rough Cutz program to do a short feature on cross-dressing, but the acting producer at that time dropped the project, deeming it "unfit" for family viewing.

Not only did we prove to Anthony that our club was a valid and healthy way for it's members to socialize and interact, but that the whole idea of a group wanting to explore another side of the gender spectrum can be a positive outlet leading to some personal fulfilment. We also noted that our membership consists of a wide sampling of people from all walks of life and political, ethnic, moral and ideological makeup are not a major concern.

Fast-forward to the night of the "project". It took place on the eve of a Thursday social and most in attendance had been forewarned that a video camera would be on site and that the footage would be aired on Television. Those who came to the social unaware were soon reassured to find that no one would be involuntarily videotaped. The segments to be shot consisted of Anthony (our host) having a makeover done by none other than Ty Morgan, definitely one

of the best makeup artists around and also one of the most gifted performers on the Calgary drag scene. The Makeover went quite well and Anthony was soon Trans-formed into "Tony", a big, beautiful babe of no meager proportions. Many thanks go to Terry for supplying the dress, hair etc. that completed the Illusion.

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Shots of Empress Terry welcoming the viewers, some other snippets of a few of the club members at the bar and a short Q&A of Christine, Terry, Princess Michelle and I were done somewhat expediently, although the cameraman was getting a little anxious by the time that ten bells rolled around. Finally, they were done at the club and the social could resume it's normal schedule. Anthony reported to us later that when he arrived at home en-femme he scared the daylights out of his dog and his wife had a real good chuckle. They had shot some other footage earlier in the day of Barbie and the shop plus a variety of the paraphernalia that is part of the feminization process. The next day it was arranged that my boy persona would meet up with Anthony and crew at local mall to do a couple of takes of me riding an escalator. Now they had everything they needed to put together an intelligent, sensitive portrayal of cross-dressers.

The final product was somehow slightly conspicuous. Not by it's content, but rather by the way it was introduced. When I first viewed the show I was disappointed to hear in their "pitch" that they would do

anything to increase their viewership, even go to the "GUTTER". Upon digesting that tidbit I was little surprised to find that their so-called selection process consisted of some typical Talk-Show gimmickry plus a smattering of derogatory language used to describe alternative sexual representation. I put full blame on the producers for this offensive slap in the face, any excuse that it was done in the name of "humour" doesn't wash away the taste of shame that I felt when I realised that I had voluntarily played a role in the swindle. Those are just a few of my sentiments regarding the "intro", my true thoughts cannot be printed on these pages.

I'm not trashing the entire segment, I thought that Anthony and his editors did a fine job of representing our situation with respect, courtesy and taste (that's what brought me out of my fit of cursing). We were not shown as deviants, the humour was tasteful and the commentary was meant to enlighten. I was genuinely pleased with the rest of the piece and even amused to find that even my own mother approved of what she saw, while she agreed with my opinion of the introduction.

The other T.V. debut was done for NUTV, which is the U of C program that is aired on Shaw Cables community station (channel 10). This feature basically consisted of a similar set of circumstances in their program, once again the host has an on-camera makeover done, this time by none other than yours-truly. This leads into some short discussion and eventually a lip-sync number featuring the shows host Rob (a.k.a. Lois Price), one of Illusions most prestigious performers Miss Special K and of course Gina Lola Bridgewater. Special thanks go to Christine & Darryl for allowing us to utilize the space on an off-night, and also for hanging around while we finished take-after-take of the lip-sync number.

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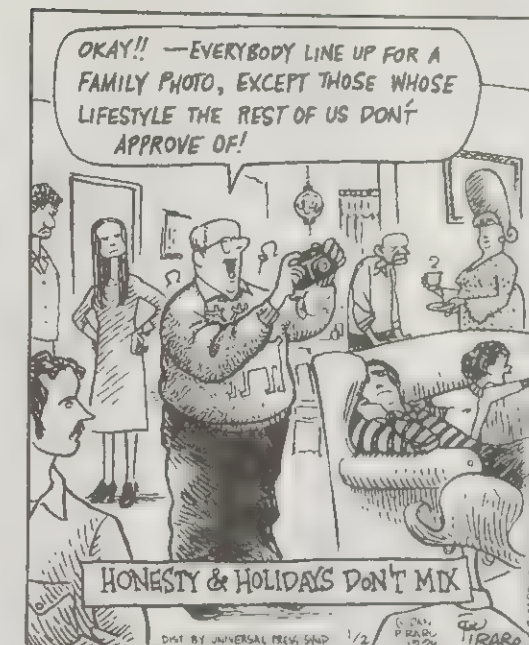
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- ETC. ETC. ETC. AND ETC

WHAT PRICE - MORALITY.

In the process of promoting tolerance among the various cultures, lifestyles, and peoples of different ethnic origins, it is often hard to make sense of the overall picture.

Recently, in the United States, the Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, (P.F.L.A.G.) Action Group initiated a television Ad campaign in an attempt to educate the general public of the basic issues in their struggle for equal rights.

In their bid to gain access to broadcast air time, the major networks were given an ultimatum by a coalition of religious/evangelist groups. If they aired the Ads they would face retaliatory measures and court challenges (among other things) by these same groups. Consequently, the Ads were never aired by the networks.

In other areas of the world, following the assassination of Jewish Prime Minister "Yitzhak Rabin" C.B.C. National magazine, (following the nightly national news) aired a program examining the issues and concerns of Jewish settlers in the disputed West Bank. These settlers, the majority of whom hold extremist views, and base their beliefs on Biblical "Promised Land Idealism," were seen driving to and from their daily biblical study sessions, past Palestinian checkpoints, next to their bible on the front car seat was a fully loaded "UZI - SUB MACHINE GUN." Is this the real Master Plan which our creator had intended?

In the week ending December 16th, C.B.C. Newsworld, "Roughcuts" aired a feature about the Bosnia - Hercegovina Civil war. Again, we find at the centre of the conflict is the deep seated, inbred hatred between Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs. The ethnic "cleansing" (killing) being justified in the name of religion.

Over the span of several hundred years, Ireland (Northern Ireland in this century,) has been a land deeply divided by religious hatred and bitterness. Only in the last couple of years have we seen any measure of progress towards a settlement of the conflict.

Throughout history, examples of hatred and persecution have been recorded, (the Spanish Inquisition among others) Wars have been waged. (the Crusades.) All attributable to religious "INTOLERANCE"

Closer to home, in our own province, a Legislative Assembly which campaigns against "Distinct Status" for Quebec, claiming all provinces are equal, has definitively stated they have no intention of guaranteeing what they call "Special Rights" for the lesbian and gay community. Do they wear blindfolds in the Legislature or what? The

lesbian and gay community are not seeking "Special Rights," their campaign quest is for "EQUALITY" and freedom from discrimination. That right which most of us take for granted is being denied to people who's only sin is that they dare to speak out about the prejudice, bigotry and hatred they are subjected to by a society who, until earlier this year, would have believed that "Paul Bernardo" was normal.

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As crossdressers, we should get behind this issue, since many of the prejudices are levelled against us if we dare to be open about our lifestyle and situation. We are so to speak "tarred with the same brush" in the view of the general public. OUR

only sin is that we enjoy the ability to derive pleasure from our inner femininity, we enjoy both sides of our personality.

Intolerance based upon religious beliefs is the common thread running through this article. This intolerance is reinforced and cemented into place by the narrow mindedness of our politicians who would save us from ourselves, yet have no qualms about sacrificing us in wars that they could have prevented.

Who defines what constitutes morality, and under who's authority do they justify enforcing it upon the world's population at large. Surely the basis to morality should be the respecting of others, regardless of Nationality, Religion or personal beliefs. If a group, or individual, pose no threat to society, or intend no harm to person or property, who has the right to call it moral or immoral.....**"WHAT PRICE MORALITY"**

We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we can fly only by embracing each other.

Article by KAREN

Sex Change....con't from page 8....

or see polish on his toe nails and think, Oh, God. Here we go again.

As time passed, Rick grew more bold. He'd pluck his eyebrows and shave his legs. He'd flutter his eyelashes and flap his wrists. Friends noticed but nobody ever said a word. "No one wanted to hurt my feelings," June says. Certain that there must be a cure for her husbands problem, June begged Rick to find help. Five years ago he did, at Denver's Gender Identity Center, a support group for cross-dressers and transsexuals. "But I was hoping the center would help Rick become a man. All it did was encourage him to become more like a woman." Rick began to dress up more often. He'd go out at night sporting high heels and short skirts. He'd take frequent trips to the mall dressed as a women' and he'd get dolled up when ever he and June were alone.

June began to be more and more repulsed. "After awhile I got numb, sexually and emotionally." Although the couple continued to have sex, June says, "I just went through the motions. I didn't want to touch him, it made me feel like a lesbian." June began to doubt her own femininity. "I couldn't help but wonder if I was supposed to look like Rick's version of a woman because most of the time, I wear jeans and t-shirts."

When five years ago Renee, then 14, asked, "Mom is Dad gay?" June knew that it was time to have a heart to heart with her. She told Renee that her father liked to wear women's clothes. "It was a relief for me. I didn't have to hide it from her anymore. But it was really tough on Renee." The girls grades and spirits sank. Nikki, then 8, would learn six months later from her Dad. "I was kind of in shock," Nikki recalls. "And I was really sad. It was weird."

Two and a half years ago, when Rick wanted to take hormones to develop breasts and reduce muscle tone, June finally gave him an ultimatum. "Take the hormones sand we were through," she warned. Rick took them secretly for a month before June discovered the

pills. June demanded a divorce. Twelve months later, Rick flew to Brussels where "in two and a half hours I went from being male to being female." From being Rick to being...Sharon*.

Sharon doesn't have to live a double life anymore. Finally she feels real. She is what she's always wanted to be. "I'm not acting anymore. I am a woman and I am happy with that. "Even her mother though initially horrified has accepted her.

But Sharon is unemployed: She lost her job for having, the military explains, "major abnormalities and defects of the genitalia." (She's fighting to get reinstated.) Sharon concedes that she isn't likely to find another mate. "I'm looking at being alone for the rest of my life. In order for me to be me, I had to hurt the ones closest to me. I'm going to have to live with that for the rest of my life. I miss my wife and children. I cry a lot." But June doesn't cry any more. Time and therapy have helped her heal. At first she was petrified to date again. "I didn't know how to go about it. For twenty years I was with someone who wanted to be a woman.

What did that make me?" But now June is spending most of her free time with a new man, a divorced father.

For Renee and Nikki, not having a dad is painful: "Aunt Sharon isn't a good enough substitute. "I'll never see my Dad again," Nikki says. Although Sharon calls frequently, Renee and Nikki say they miss and want a father. "I have two parents," says Renee. "I just don't have a Mom and a Dad." The girls, however, have no doubts about their love for Sharon. They also feel sorry for her. "She's a little hunched over and looks frail," Renee says. "My dad used to stand tall."

June, though no longer mourning, is still angry. Not at Rick. But at his stand in. "I'm, mad at Sharon for taking my husband away. But how can I compete with her when this woman is my husband?"

*To give herself a chance to start a new life, Sharon has asked that her real name not be used.

Reprinted from Today's WOMAN magazine, January/February 1996

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TRANSVESTISM WITHIN A PARTNERSHIP OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILIES.

BY YVONNE SINCLAIR. SECOND (REVISED) EDITION.

INTRODUCTION.

The big question, the one that is always asked, is WHY? Not only about transvestites, but of any form of expression outside of that safe area which is regarded as "Normal". What, really, is normal? If it is normal for a boy to play football well, is a boy who cannot abnormal? Years ago, left handed people were seen as having an abnormality; now, in this more enlightened age, we no longer notice.

How do we gain this understanding which turns the abnormal to normal? At what stage do we human beings stop concerning ourselves with the faults of others and -- as a mass -- accept?

Man and woman have the power to reason - by adding and subtracting knowledge we can work out a formula, from the formula we arrive at an answer. We have succeeded in creating an equation out of a myth, and myths are no more than doubts. Doubts are fears; fear is silence, and silence is ignorance. Until we have a formula to use we can gain no knowledge or understanding.

We do not seek to condone or condemn, but to offer you a little knowledge to aid your judgement. To some, transvestism is a problem that they will not resolve. Others will accept it, and adjust to it. Our statements will affect your decision. You

may feel we are biased towards acceptance. We are. Above all things the love of two people for each other is of primary importance. You were once strangers, but you have shared your joys, sorrows, doubts and problems. You looked to a future united in the love of two beings. It is an emotion that which only humans

can share with voice; we are able to speak, and to listen. Compassion for each others's helplessness must be better than turning away from each other through lack of understanding.

Knowledge can be acquired by setting out to find an answer to the causes of confusion and puzzlement -- to actions which seem abnormal. This booklet, in the format of questions and answers, sets out along the road to greater understanding. Most transvestites see the whole affair as the beginning and end of all their living, but the reasons are simple. The motive is related to sexual imagination, the act is a means to an end. If it is suppressed, it gives rise to fears and a guilt complex; for no more than being someone else, while remaining aware that they are still themselves -- but in the guise of a female.

Transvestism; man's oddest form of behaviour, is the last unacceptable minority, the least understood. Riddled with myths of their own making, man's true envy of the female, adoration of the female beyond the bounds of logic; the need to experience for themselves, not what it feels to be someone else as an actor might -- but to be seen as the opposite sex.

Transvestism, then, -- **unfrocked!**

YVONNE SINCLAIR

1. I have discovered that my husband/boyfriend is a transvestite. What makes him do it.

He has been drawn, for whatever reason, into dressing in female clothes.

This has become a compulsion. There are no set patterns, but as the person gets older the urge towards transvestism can grow stronger. Please try to keep an open mind: within this booklet we hope to diminish or dispel many of your fears, and help you towards understanding. You will learn that many of your fears have no foundation. The unknown always creates misunderstanding; once you have a better knowledge of transvestism you should be able to find some degree of tolerance.

A transvestite is not mentally ill, nor is he harmful to others. Transvestism is a compulsion to dress as a woman. In society, women are accepted and acknowledged as being gentler people. Transvestites dress in order to adopt the stereotyped image of the female, which is invariably a softer, more relaxed person.

Men who enjoy dressing as women, and have done so for a number of years, have developed a certain feeling for behaviour which is gentle; they do not consider violence as part of this image. In society, we regard the female as the one who shows love, tenderness and gentleness. Women show care and devotion to children. Violence is part of the male image. Transvestites like to shed the male image and take on that of the female, along with the clothes. They feel that when they are dressed they can relax and be free from the everyday pressures and tensions of being male.

Transvestism is at best a lonely act, and they have little contact with other people. They do nothing apart from dress which could be described as

mentally sick. A large number of women dress in jeans and boots and adopt male wear as a mode of fashion. We do not consider them to be mentally ill.

Transvestism is like smoking; easy to start and very hard to stop. It can start as simple curiosity and grow into an act of which he is constantly aware; he may feel he has to dress to express himself. He may strive to feel normal, yet be driven by his need to wear the clothing of the opposite sex. There are no definite 'reasons' why a man becomes a transvestite.

Human beings experience a complex set of emotions; the mind can draw us into friendship or love without our really understanding the attraction. It is too easy to take peoples good points for granted and forget them; yet blame them for their human failings and faults. You may find that you are resenting something which seems unsuitable to your lifestyle, or to your pre-conceived ideas.

Loneliness in young children is sometimes an important factor. He might have been a shy child who was jealous of the way his sister was shown open affection. Sight and smell play important roles in associations with mother. Womanly smells and the clothing worn can have an acute affect on the fertile mind of a young child. His imagination creates pictures of safety and love, a feeling which the items of clothing will accentuate. His sister might have been able to talk to his mother in ways that were forbidden to him. Wearing a dress closed the gap between the sexes for him and perhaps he thought that if he were a girl he would have the same attention.

As he grows older he understands better how clothes identify sexual roles. He is puzzled by the aura of mystery which girls' clothes have, even when they are not being worn. Great attention is paid to making female clothes soft and decorative. They are pleasing to his senses and he

may like their feel, although he feels guilty at touching them. They arouse sexual feelings, and yet women hide them. He can recall, however, seeing women posing in underwear on hoardings, television, newspapers and books. In real life, they are hidden and become fascinating. The clothes take on a symbolic meaning. The discovery that he can wear them will create a sense of the erotic. The sight and feel will induce sexual pleasure, erection and masturbation. Then he feels guilty that he has used the clothes as a means of sexual expression. He will create a sexual fantasy and continue to use the clothes to create sexual excitement, and to induce it.

We all have sexual fantasies. The transvestite wants to wear female clothes, and yet retain his male sexual identity. This will result in guilt and mental confusion. He may feel he is going mad. Fear of discovery and the compulsion to dress creates a conflict of will, but the urge never ceases.

2 How common is transvestism?

Transvestism is to a great extent very secretive, so it is impossible to estimate exactly how many transvestites there are. The figures put up by various connected organisations differ. We can only state, from the large number of transvestites who do make social contact, that a rough estimate would be a million or more, of varying degrees, in this country. There are transvestites who never feel the need for any form of social contact, or who use only part of the female clothing as a catalyst.

Your husband/boyfriend is part of a group which generally feels alienated and is reluctant to come out into the open, so it is impossible to give you an exact figure.

3 What type of background do transvestites come from?

Transvestism has no social barriers: from Dukes to Dustmen, we are all reduced to one level through our

badge of office; the skirt. Transvestism is the last unaccepted form of social behaviour; the last minority, the most misunderstood, and man's strangest social habit. There are many theories as to why they start, but each transvestite can deny that any of them are the reason why he started. Neither is there an age limit to when one can start, some have been known to at a very early age, just after crawling; others as late as sixty years or older. In all of them, the fears of discovery are the same; no matter what their background, all believe at the beginning that they are the only one, and few ever have any desire to bring it out in the open. Even those who wish society to understand them better are reluctant to make themselves visible. All have tried to stop; all have discovered that they can not resist re-starting. Cures are there none - there is no cure for pleasure.

Meeting others within Groups or Societies is a great leveller; no one is better or worse, colour, politics or religion have no meaning. The walks and classes of society are immaterial. Old age or youth do not matter - the young can be wise, the old foolish. But the pleasure of knowing that they are not alone cannot be measured. Transvestites are a small group of human beings with only one thing in common - they are men in the guise of women. Through social dress, they defy the rules of what is male and female in their social image to society. At best we are a travesty of women; in being so, we are transvestite.

This very informative and thought provoking manual book was brought in to us from one of our new Members. We will serialize the contents for our Illusions Magazine through the New Year.

Gay Lines
(403)
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"SOME INNER RE

By: Michelle Hart, 1st Princess

For years my closet experience as a transvestite was a lonely, guilt ridden and a fearful experience! From that perspective the world around me seemed huge and threatening. I was convinced if other people knew of my urge to crossdress, that they wouldn't understand. What I never realized until after I came out, was how much damage I was inflicting on myself during those years. Or, how much anger and frustration that I was transferring to other people through the constant secretive suppression of my true personality! It's only now that I've had some experience out of the closet that I can compare the realities of the two situations. The question is why did I act this way? Why did I keep this deep emotion that is such an important part of me, a secret for so long? The simple answer is fear....fear of rejection! In my own mind I created a gulf so large that I was afraid to cross it and so I didn't for almost twenty six years.

Recently, I was asked why do I crossdress. My answer was "I don't know why" and then, I asked..."why are there stars in the sky?" You could think that my reply was a "glib" one, but the fact is that I could spend a lifetime looking for answers or justifications as to why I dress as a female. I had to ask myself, would having the answer make me happy? In the end I didn't think so. What I really needed to do was deal with my fear of crossing the self imposed gulf that was preventing me from living my life as it was meant to be! So in the end I came out of the darkness of the closet and into the light! It seems easy now, but at the time it was a hard thing to do. I had to keep telling myself over and over again that I was not the only crossdresser in the world, that I had a place in space and that I belonged somewhere.

The truth is that people who crossdress come from both sexes and from every walk of life! We exist..Yea, we persist on every

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continent and within every race and religion that exists on this earth. The majority of crossdressers, just like everyone else live acceptable social and productive lives. As our "quote normal selves", we support our loved ones, our friends and we participate in our community and it's events. When alone and in the closet by ourselves, our fear is that by revealing this part of ourselves to others we will be rejected and therefore separated from these things we value as human beings. That we will be prevented from receiving the love of another, or the right to participate in our community and therefore not receive the validation of living a worthwhile life as a human being. It is true that condemnation by other people of things "they" don't understand and therefore find threatening is a daily part of the human experience, but does that make it something we should fear or be subservient to? I don't think so! So the message is, if this part of your life is still a lonely secret, relax and try to accept yourself for who and what you are. Don't wait as long as I did to put your house in order. Realize that you are not alone and remember, if you can create fear then you can also create strength. So use that strength to put your fears on that shelf where they belong and then come out into the light and enjoy your world!

With Love & Best Wishes For The New Year,

Michelle Hart

Princess Jacqui

from page 6

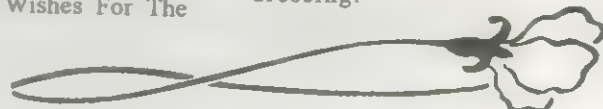
On June 10th, seven of us paraded our "stuff" for a very appreciative audience. When the evening wound up, a 1 vote margin had declared Teri as Empress V and Michele as the 1st Princess. To my utter amazement, with cameras flashing all around, I stood next to these two worthy leaders with a tiara on my head and a bouquet of flowers in my hand. 2nd Princess of illusions. I was in shock for about 2 weeks.

The summer was exciting! First the A.R.G.R.A. rodeo at Simons Valley, then the Coronation Ball in Edmonton and finally our own "Girls of Summer". Along the way, through a curious turn of events, I was chosen to head up the coming conference in Kananaskis. This would be a major undertaking and my focus was almost entirely on making sure it happened.

November finally rolled around and the conference came together thanks to a hard working team of individuals who were dedicated to improving the lot of cross dressers and showing the world that we, here in Calgary, know how to put on a great show. The conference was an outstanding success and I would be remiss if I didn't single out Stephanie and Michele for their many hours of work.

In 1996 I will continue to carry out my duties as 2nd Princess to the best of my ability. It is an honour that I take very seriously. In addition, I intend to work at reducing the animosities that have arisen between groups that are supposedly working to the same goal, that of bringing dignity and acceptance to an alternate lifestyle, cross dressing.

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Change.....
.....is good!

*For the club that encourages
changing from pants to
skirts, there will be some
changes of it's own this year*

As you may have noticed there have been some changes to the Illusions magazine format. To encourage more readers from across Canada and the U.S. we are offering the free service of allowing crossdressers, transsexuals and their friends to enter their names and photos into an expanded personals section. This is not intended to alienate our faithful Illusions group. An Illusions member is entitled to privileges beyond a personal listing, she is included in the Illusions member registry, given 6 copies of Illusions magazine and allowed all the club facility privileges. It is hoped that with this format change we will find more friends and eventual Illusions members. With more magazine buyers we will have the revenue to improve the magazine's look and increase its content.

The next change you will find at Illusions is that our yearly membership fee has increased to \$50 from \$40, the cost of magazine mailing has increased as have facility operation costs. The increase is not that high considering that it should cost over twice that much for Illusions to rent its space. Costs are kept at a minimum to allow everyone to enjoy Illusions.

At the door of our Illusions socials and parties we will be charging our usual \$6 entry fee for members and their spouses, but for invited guests of members or Illusions they will be charged \$10 for entry. This is one of the bonuses of being an Illusions member and way of offsetting costs at our functions without compromising the quality of enjoyment.

Questions, concerns? See Christine or Barbie

Illusions Magazine

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Volume 1 Issue 1

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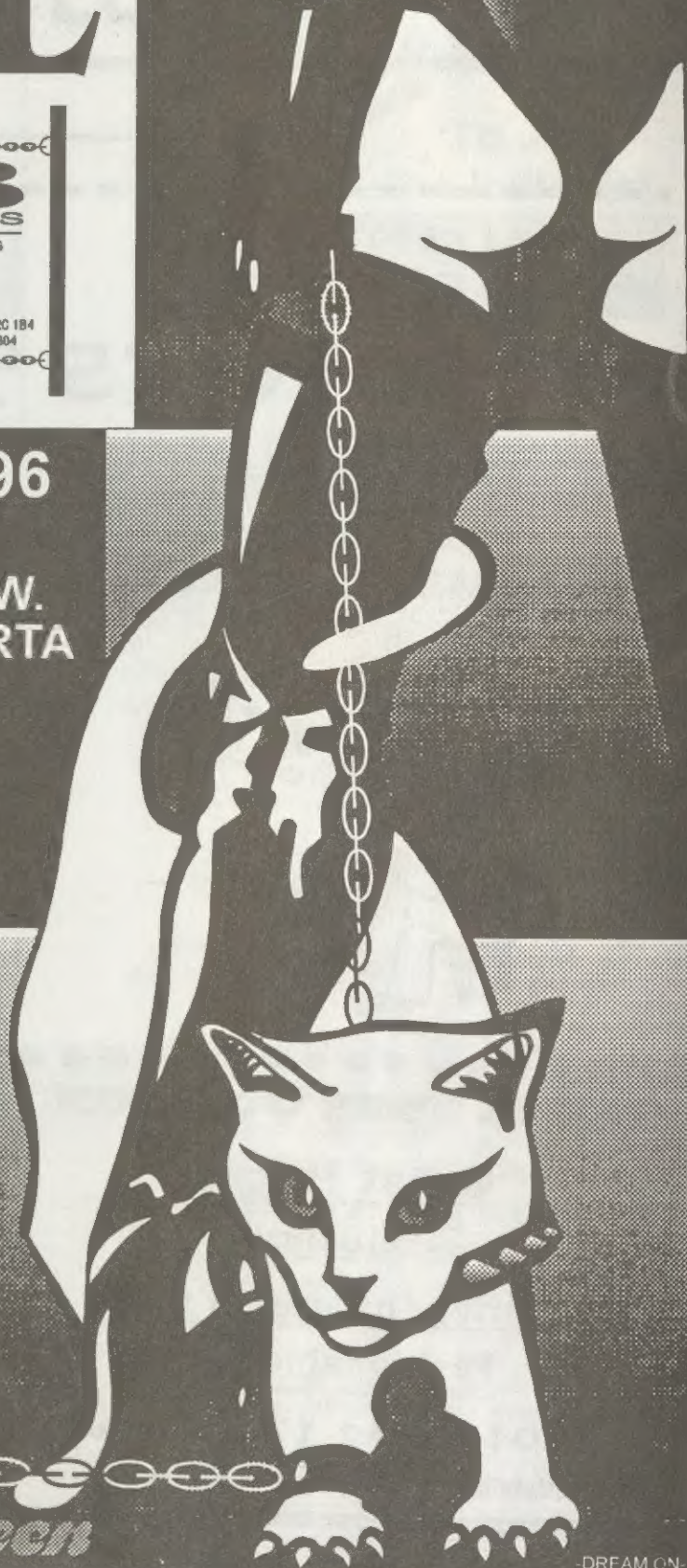
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